



Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1876, by BEADLE AND ADAMS, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

Vol. VII.

E. F. Beadle,
William Adams,
David Adams,
PUBLISHERS.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 6, 1877.

TERMS IN ADVANCE.
(One copy, four months, \$1.00
One copy, one year, 3.00
Two copies, one year, 5.00)

No. 356.

PRAYER FOR TO-DAY.

BY JOHN GOSSETT.

My God: To-day unclose our eyes
To all the precious things
Thou sendest us from out the skies,
Whereof no poet sings.

Hold this To-day so near our sight—
And yet so far away—
That we may know to-morrow's light
Gleams ever on To-day!

For this we feel is what we need
More than all else to learn:
That blessings brought too close to read
Short-sight cannot discern.

All blame be ours; yet help us, Lord,
To so transform our sight
That, read nearer or far, Thy Word
May be construed aright.

Except we see To-day on earth
As it to us is given,
How shall we come to know the worth
Of one To-day in Heaven?

The Red Cross;

OR,

The Mystery of Warren-Guilerland.

A ROMANCE OF THE ACCURSED COINS.

BY GRACE MORTIMER.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TWO EMIRS.

ONE year ago to-day Baron Warren-Guilerland rode from his castle gates. The gleam of dawn is spreading a soft, golden glow over the solitary, barren land; from east to west, from north to south, there is not a break in the dead calm of the yellow wilderness; the sky burns red like a wasting fire, and azure clouds drift across it, lifting high the tempting mirage of shining water-courses and full-fledged trees. It is an Arabian desert, boundless, scorched, desolate.

Two horsemen urge their weary horses along the trackless plain. They have been traveling all night and have not yet reached the oasis where alone it is safe to halt during the mid-day heat.

Both wear the garb of the Bedouin, the snow-white burnous and turban, with the glittering dagger thrust into their scabbard girdles; their skin is of the rich olive-bronze hue of the sons of the desert, and the steeds they besetride are desert-bred and bred, intelligent, as his nanity, and swift as the hawk whose swoop they emulate.

But these men, as they ride close together through the great wilderness, speak in the English tongue—and the theme is—Warren-Guilerland!

Once more behold Herman Berthold, Baron Warren-Guilerland, and his servant Norris.

And what has lured the great man here?

A lady's face!

Incredible? Not at all! He carries a very fine photograph of it in his safest pocket, over his heart, and could you see that precious card you would believe anything possible for its sweet sake.

The baron had gone on a mission—the discovery of Warren-Guilerland's next-of-kin. In his hand he held two clues, the names which conclude the map of pedigree drawn for the reader in the end of the last chapter.

These names were *Millicent*, who married *Giles Thetford*, and her cousin *Jacob*, son of *Margaret and Pascal Kercheval*.

Thetford and *Kercheval*—the two clues. He wasted six months, and was as wise as when he commenced. One day he saw in London, in a fashionable photographer's salon, a countenance in which this keen physiognomist traced the indelible Warren-Guilerland phylax. Besides this, the face was very beautiful. He purchased it, not without difficulty—for this was a breach of the etiquette of the art—and gleaned the name of its possessor.

It was neither *Thetford* nor *Kercheval*, it was *Valrose*.

She was the only child of Colonel Victor Valrose, U. S. A., a noted capitalist, who had forsaken his native land some years previously to reside in St. Petersburg.

Baron Berthold dropped the clues and followed the face. It eluded him at St. Petersburg; the capitalist, accompanied by his wife and daughter, had departed months ago on a colossal pleasure trip round the world.

Baron Berthold followed the face from land to land, and by a series of tantalizing mischances it always litted on before him, just out of reach, yet ever luring him onward with a promise of the morrow.

As he and his old attendant urge their drooping horses over the barren, they talk confidently of coming up with the English tourists by half noon—they expect to overtake them as they rest at a certain oasis mid-way across the desert, the Wady Zebid.

Norris thinks his new master even more eccentric than his old one, but his inexhaustible resources, his endurance, gallantry in moments of danger, his unruffled tranquillity and inflexible tenacity of purpose, all have imbued the old man with a superstitious reverence for him, as a being omnipotent.

What character can he not assume, so as to deceive the very natives themselves? What language can he not speak? Are there any mysteries upon earth locked from the knowledge of Baron Berthold?

He is wont to assume the nationality of every country through which the witch-face Miss Valrose leads him. This plan, when it can be successfully followed, saves time, averts danger, and spares the traveler a purse. As for Norris, his only refuge lies in silence and an anxious imitation of his master's every look and gesture while surrounded by the inquisitive aborigines; he passes as the Great Unknown's deaf-mute.

Suddenly the baron, being a little in advance of his follower and glancing back to address him, noted a dark cloud appearing in the horizon from which they themselves had come, and skimming rapidly along the ground.

He drew up abruptly, raising his field-glass to his eyes.

"It is a party of those vultures, the 'Robbers of the Plains!'" exclaimed he; "they are armed to the teeth; their sheik is at their head; they are evidently on the track of the caravan. And, by my faith, if numbers mean victory, I tremble for the travelers!"

"Will they come this way?" quavered Norris, who was indifferently timid.

"We stand straight in their path," replied the baron, returning his glass to its place; "in half an hour they will be here."

"And what—what had we better do?" cried Norris, with exquisite apprehension.

"Feed and rest our horses, so that we can accompany them," said the baron, dropping to the ground and deftly removing the bit from his beautiful little steed's mouth as he spoke.



"Oh, my Great Father on high, accept the sacrifice, and give me at last my heart's desire—a father's love!"

ground and deftly removing the bit from his beautiful little steed's mouth as he spoke.

Norris turned pale under the eye which bronzed his wrinkled face, and with a heavy heart imitated his intrepid master as he took from his holsters a few handfuls of coarse barley-meal and some dates, and fed them to the eager brute, rubbing its slender limbs carefully down afterward. Then the baron threw himself upon the sand in his horse's shadow, directing his servant to do the same.

"Our only chance to escape the spears of those marauders," remarked he, "is to betray no fear, and as they approach to meet them with a flag of truce. I shall presently discern of what tribe they are, and will greet them as brethren; we shall then accompany them upon their present raid, and possibly I may be fortunate enough to serve the Amudarya, or at least the lady whom I have followed so long."

Norris groaned and began to mutter a prayer.

On they came, a hundred horsemen, looming nearer and nearer, their lances flashing in the glare of the early sun, the galloping hoofs of their splendid stallions dashing the light sand up in clouds like spray. A few paces in advance their leader swept alone, his white hawk floating around him, a carbuncle as large as a pigeon's egg blazing among the snow-white folds of his turban, his piercing eyes gleaming, and his jet-black beard sweeping down to his waist, where shone a grim array of weapons.

When the band was some twenty paces distant, Baron Berthold rose, and lifting his white cambric handkerchief on the point of his spear, calmly walked forward to meet it.

Next instant they were around him like a crowd of vultures.

The khalfas was a superb specimen of his race, all bone and sinew—a giant athlete. He bent his eager, flashing gaze upon the stranger as if he would pierce his very soul, as he said in his own language—respecting the white flag with true Arab punctiliousness:

"Peace be upon thee. Now, who art thou, who dares to cross the course of Timour-Emad, the Eagle of the Desert?"

"Peace be upon thee, Great Emir," returned the baron, exclaiming an obeisance the perfection of Bedouin elegance; "I am thy brother. Wouldst thou know Masudi?"

His words acted like magic.

The mighty leader threw himself from his steed, and bowed to the ground before him, while his following, as he dismounted, as if one set of springs moved the whole band, prostrated themselves in a semi-circle around the principal actors.

The secret of the marvel was this: the baron, alert to pick up all items of information which might lessen the peril which environed his solitary wanderings, the baron was pretty well posted in the current events of the desert, and knew that lately the sheiks of two long rival tribes, by name Masudi and Timour-Emad, had formed an alliance to annihilate a mutual foe; and not having yet met, he calmly assumed the name of Masudi whenever he heard the name of Timour-Emad, confident of not being unmasked until he had time to escape out of his haughty dupe's clutches.

And how earnest thou, my illustrious brother, into the heart of Sahara accompanied by but yonder ancient?" inquired Timour-Emad, these preliminaries having been settled.

The quiet-Masudi gave an off-hand explanation that he and his little band of warriors were crossing the plain in the track of a caravan—the Emir's bushy eyebrows thickened—with which an English party were traveling, people of great consequence in their own land, whose molestation would bring England's ferocious legions down upon Arabia; that he was anxious to protect; how he was outnumbered, his men cut down, and he only, with his servant, the mule, escaped.

Timour-Emad heard with grave courtesy, and then graciously welcoming his brother Masudi to continue his journey under his protection, ordered two of the finest horses in the band to be brought from the rear, and pressed them upon the acceptance of the delighted baron, for himself and his servant, turning over their own jaded animals to the reserves.

A few minutes more and they were dashing along the sea wastes, at a pace which severely tried the metal of poor old Norris to say the least, practiced fox-hunter though he was, and accustomed, in time gone by, to cross a country at the heels of the hounds, taking all the rough and water-fence and ditch that came in his way with the best of them.

As for the baron, he sat his splendid mount like a man of iron, his hand as light as a woman's on the curb, and carried on the conversation with the Emir as they skimmed over the noiseless sand with the sure-foot of a man perfectly at his ease.

But the Emir's dark, lean visage wore a cloud which all the affability of his discourse failed to dissipate; his man, too, wore gloomy and dissatisfied looks.

Masudi affected to notice nothing, however, and tranquilly continued his lofty vainglories of the glories won in warfare by his own ever-victorious tribe.

The hours passed; the sun poured down its pitiless blaze, which the sand refracted like red-hot iron—not a zephyr stirred; the broad breasts of the horses were covered with foam fiercely blown from their blood-red nostrils, their limbs were clothed with sweat and the light drift of the splashed-up sand; their riders panted, with baked, dry lips apt to catch a breath of air, while their shaggy brows almost concealed their glimmering eyes, half-closed against the dazzling glare of the sun and the needle-sharp drift of the dust; but the fury of the gallop never slackened, and Timour-Emad whispered not a hint of the object of his ride.

Meantime the character of the country changed; it became more broken and undulating, and then some faint gleams of vegetation lit up the bleak and arid expanse.

"We approach the Wady Zebid," said Timour-Emad; "yonder curls the smoke of the Franks where they lie at rest around the water-spring."

And he waved his dark hand toward a pale-blue haze that hovered upon the ground some miles distant.

Presently they swept up to the base of a line of bare rocks which had been gradually magnifying from their first pigmy proportions to a lofty altitude, and at a sign from the Emir, the latter's hand were off their horses and unloading the packs.

The sheik, the baron, and Norris remained on their steeds in the center of the busy throng.

The chiefs looked solemnly at each other.

The mute kept his eye immovably fastened on his master, with the most agonizing expression of anxiety.

"My brother Masudi," said the Emir, breaking silence at last, "yonder caravan erst carries treasure, captives, worth a prince's acceptance. Many merchants are banded together yonder; they are all rich in gold and gems. We perish for bread—they pass through our territory, and we are unable to better—they are our prey! We have pledged our word to the great men of our tribe that we return laden with spoil. Allah is Allah! His will be done!"

"My brother Timour-Emad is a great chief," returned the baron, with a majestic air, "and will despise the spoil that is beneath the notice of Masudi, except to move his compassion and invite his aid."

The Emir's eyes glittered hungrily, the "sowd" blackened on his brow.

"My brother is right," said he, stifling his anger, however; "the spoil is not worthy to be the cause of dispute between brothers. I have sworn by the Law and the Prophet that the gold in yonder encampment shall gladden in the tents of my people ere the moon rise. My brother Masudi is welcome to his share, or, if he prefers to be at peace with the Franks, the desert lies before him every way except the way toward the Wady Zebid."

"Illustrious Djed!" exclaimed Masudi, haughtily, "the bonds of our alliance are but newly fashioned; how knowest thou that they will not snap beneath this untoward weight?"

The Emir flinched, but drew up defiantly.

"If they be so flimsy as to snap, God's will be done!" replied he, with exquisite softness and civility.

The baron mused. He had experimented on the subtle Arab as far as he dared; it was patent that fear of Masudi's wrath would not withhold his hand from murdering and rifling the caravan.

The only chance to save the Valrose family lay now through the baron's accompanying the marauders, and perhaps claiming these three people as his share of the plunder.

He affected to throw off the displeasure in his manner, and to submit to the Emir's will. He made a low bow, and placed his hand impressively upon his breast.

"Masudi is content; he will go with the great chief," said he.

Timour-Emad's brow cleared, his manner warmed, and he turned to the baron with a friendly and hasty enunciation with the stately formality of an emperor in his palace, he suffered him at last to dismount, and led him into the low kruma of goat-skins which had been pitched for their sheik by the busy and silent warriors.

CHAPTER V.

THE DESERT STRUGGLE.

THE unconscious travelers were encamped in the welcome shade of the spreading trees of Wady Zebid.

Ten immense caravans, a troop of camels, and about forty souls in all, comprised the caravan. Of these, twenty were warriors, the Arab guard. The only tourists of the party were the Valrozes, who had taken advantage of these marauders crossing the desert with their convoy, to accomplish in safety—as they supposed—this perilous passage; not a soul dreamed that danger was near.

The natives had unpacked the camels and pitched the tents. Half a dozen at least were drawn in a circle around the black, cold, gushing water which flowed from a cleft of rock, overhung with a rich growth of tropical verdure; the animals browsed off the delicious lush grass under the fig-trees, and the Arab guard had thrown themselves down in their places in a wide outer circle, with their eyes fixed on the wilderness which surrounded this haven of rest.

Profound silence reigned, broken only by the snort of some steed whose delicate nostrils the long grass had tickled, or the deep breath of some camel as it laid itself luxuriously down among the cool, damp sedges of the water-courses.

Overcome with the fatigue of the night, and the noon heat, the travelers slept.

Not all, though; one might have heard the murmur of highbred female voices, had one chosen to listen beside the principal marquee. In the dim amber light under the dusky canvas two American ladies might have been discovered, the elder reclining upon a couch of velvety tiger-skins, and the younger kneeling on the flower-strewn ground at her side, gently fanning her with a huge black silk Spanish fan.

Both were tall, fair, and pale, with the exquisite patrician beauty of the pure Saxon; but the daughter, in her first bloom, with her delicate, imperial head and stag-like nose, her radiant soul beaming from her eyes of royal pansy-purple, and her waving tresses of spun gold sweeping around her lithe, band-like neck—she was well worth her pretty mother's admiration, and she was getting it, too, full measure, from humid, shining eyes and quivering, smiling lip, as the pair cooed and caressed, while their lot slept behind yonder curtain of lurid, gold-embroidered silk.

Mrs. Valrose and her daughter were discussing a theme that to them was fraught with ever fresh interest.

"Listen—surely a stranger one for lovely lips could scarce be suggested."

"It is the one thing on earth that I desire—I would be content to die if God would give it me," said the young lady, a shiver of exquisite feeling running through her murmurous tones.

"Be patient, darling; it's a long lane that has no turning!" sighed Mrs. Valrose. "Such devotion, humility and tenderness must at last prevail. Alas! how can he withstand her?" and a stifled sigh bore witness to the bitterness of the lady's reflections.

"Mother," wailed the lovely girl, "why does my father deny me his love?"

"Cordelia, cease to ask that harrowing question!" implored Mrs. Valrose, averting her troubled eye from the passionate gaze of her child; "there is no head, it is a causeless curse that has fallen upon the innocent life of my pretty, sweet child."

"I have striven so earnestly to win his love!" faltered Cordelia, her delicate face growing white and stern; "over since I was old enough to know him for my father I have loved him with an idolatrous passion; I have devoted my life to win his affection in return; and to-day, when I am twenty-one, he tells me with a cold smile that henceforth I am as much my own mistress—as far as he is concerned—as any other lady on the globe—that he relinquishes the duties of parental guardianship with a happy heart, and passes me over to the first eligible proffer who falls a victim to my 'lovely glances.'"

"You heard him say it, mamma; you saw the covert sneer on his lip, and the icy glance of aversion which accompanied it; alas, what have I done? Cordelia, indeed, was ever such a sad misnomer!"

Mrs. Valrose put out her arm, and catching her beautiful child to her heart, held her there in a convulsive embrace, while bitter tears coursed down her transparent cheeks.

"Never in all my life," continued Cordelia, gently disengaging herself, her bosom heaving with grief and shame, "has he laid a kind hand upon my head, or kissed me, or said 'My daughter!' he has shunned me as if I were deformed, or plague-struck, or the hated memento of some past misery—rather of some past crime, the memory of which eats into all his enjoyments, and turns all he touches into gall. Mother, in pity tell me, what have I done to deserve this?"

The soft eyes of Mrs. Valrose gave one little dangerous flash.

"You have done nothing—nothing!" said she, in a bitter voice. "If utter innocence could have softened his heart, he would long ago have loved me Cordelia as fondly as he loves me. Child, ask me no more; be content with my love; it is not lavished upon you with every breath I draw!"

For a few moments the mother and daughter remained clasped in each other's arms; the tinkling of the water from its shadowed rock came sweetly to their ears, mingled with the whirr of some gorgeously-plumaged tropical bird as it darted from tree to tree; the rich scent of the masked flowers upon which Cordelia knelt stole upon the still, dry, sultry atmosphere; cheek to cheek and heart to heart these two dainty recipients of Fortune's careless favors communed in stricken silence over the one unendurable thorn in their lot.

Suddenly a long, shrill cry rang out, close beside them. It was the war-cry of their Moslem foes: "Allah-il-Allah!"

The ladies bounded to their feet, and at the same instant Mrs. Valrose strode from behind the curtain and seized his pistols from the table. Mrs. Valrose ran to his protection, pale as death, but Cordelia stood where she was, her dark eyes fixed upon the closed curtain of heavy cloth which hung at the entrance of the tent.

Meantime, the yell of the startled guard had answered the challenge of the enemy; the quiet encampment was transformed in a moment to a hive teeming with activity. The thunder of advancing horse could be distinctly heard on the velvet sward; they had surprised the camp in the rear, while the sentinels watched the desert.

The sharp report of fire-arms, and the singing whistle of bullets proclaimed that the struggle had begun; and the dismayed calculations of the Arabs, and hoarse, fierce, desperate rallying cry of their commander, (a Frenchman with the body of a Lilliputian and the soul of a Brodignag), told with grim significance how fearfully uneven the battle was to be.

Victor Valrose looked down on his beautiful wife as she clung in frantic terror to him.

He was a magnificent man; carried himself with the erectness of an old soldier; his eye was a cold, radiant blue; his heavy mustache black as coal and his hair white as snow. His features were of that proud, aquiline beauty which belongs of right to imperious and fiery natures, but, even now, at fifty, that commanding face could soften and warm with love or humor as eloquently as any young blood's.

"Madeline, wife," exclaimed he in a low voice, which sounded so wonderfully out of place with that accompaniment of howls and snapping musketry, so replete with manly affection was it, "have I ever failed in love to you?"

Arrested, in spite of her terror, she answered, hysterically:

"No, no, my blessed husband, never! Let us die together!"

"Why then judge so hardly one whose fault has been that he loved you too well to pass through life unscathed by the fires of sin and remorse?" said he, passionately. "Kiss me, Madeline; it may indeed be the last time!"

She drew down his stately head and pressed fond kisses on his lips, and Cordelia turned her patient eyes from the doorway, fixing them mournfully upon the pair.

"Must go," said Mr. Valrose, gently putting his wife back on the couch from which she had risen; "every soul is needed to defend the encampment. Stay close, my dear, my dear! Farewell, for a time!"

As he spoke these faltering words, retiring slowly toward the opening of the tent with his gaze fixed to the last upon the agonized face of his wife, a low moan escaped from the unhappy daughter.

She who idolized him, who would gladly have submitted to the fiercest tortures, only to wring a faint word of interest or compassion from him—was to receive no farewell, not even one passing glance!

Valrose started as his eye fell on her. Such a haunting look as she gave him!

He stopped, a spasm contracted his features; involuntarily as it would seem he stretched out his arms to her.

Oh, the wild flash of wondering, incredulous rapture that lit her whole being for a moment into dazzling radiance! Oh, the eloquence of her faint, murmurous sigh, as she falteringly approached him, her hands outstretched to clasp him in the first embrace she had ever known of fatherly affection!

She was too slow, a mighty revulsion surged over him, he dropped his arms, his face hardened, his eye froze.

She stopped a pace or two from him, she had read him.

"Take care of your mother, Cordelia," was all he said; next instant the curtain fell behind him; mother and daughter were alone.

Cordelia stood in the center of the tent, motionless. Indeed, what with her lovely face so spectral and her hair so white, dressed in gown open at the marble throat, and loosely girdled at the slender waist by a silver chain, she might have passed for a statue of any of the Greek heroines of mythology, clothed by an immortal hand.

"God!" whispered Cordelia, with an exceeding bitter cry, "now grant me death!"

It is the one thing on earth that I desire—I would be content to die if God would give it me," said the young lady, a shiver of exquisite feeling running through her murmurous tones.

He paused an instant, scrutinizing the beautiful, icy face of the young girl intently, then he spoke, softly:

"Ladies, I would save you; there is only one way though."

They regarded him wildly; his manner was friendly, his dark face smiled gently upon them.

"What way?" demanded Cordelia.

He approached nearer, and whispered:

"When the struggle is over and the captives are driven before the Emir Timour-Emad and Masudi, I, Masudi, will claim the maiden for my wife and she must appear to submit. Thus only can I save the white ladies from the fate of war."

Mrs. Valrose uttered a scream of horror and snatched her child convulsively to her, as if already she saw her the prey of that dusky-visaged Bedouin, whose calm bright eyes scanned her so narrowly; but Cordelia said quickly:

"Appear, you say? Is this a generous ruse to rescue?"

"Masudi is a friend," replied the Arab. "Come, what do you answer? If the maiden reveals a shade of reluctance the hot-hearted and envious Timour-Emad will make it an excuse to snatch her from me for his own tent."

"You will not hold me to my promise, Arab?" demanded Cordelia, looking at him full-eyed. The steady gaze of the stranger met her unflinchingly; an electric thrill seemed to emanate from his eyes to the heart of the maiden, she hastily added: "No, see you will not, you are genuine. One thing, my friend; grant me the life of my father!"

"It may be too late," said the Arab; "besides, I know him not."

"No—no—of course you don't!" faltered the lovely girl, for the first time betraying agitation; "but I can point him out to you—come!" and she was flying out of the tent.

The Arab barred her way.

"It is death—or—he lowered his tone—"I would save you for you there!"

"AFTER MANY DAYS."

BY MRS. ADDIE D. ROLLISTON.

Kiss me just once in the old, old days,
Days that were bright with sunshine and with flowers.
And mayhap with the thrill of your caress
I can forget the present bitter hours!
We loved each other in the sweet, lost past,
And counted not that coming years would blight
The glory of the summer's golden days,
And leave our path within the gloom of night!
Was it but yesterday that we two walked
The sunny woodland path where wild flowers grew,
Where daisies, starting all the grasses sweet,
Lent all their brightness to the emerald hue?
I see again the misty lights that hung
Like silver stars above the purple hills,
And hear the rustling of the whispering leaves
And the low, sad monody of distant rills!
I see the scarlet blooms that drooping hung
Like banners o'er the river's winding shore,
And blend their odors with the fragrant breeze
That swept the valley and the woodland o'er.
A spicy sweetness came from distant pines,
A golden splendor fell o'er meadows fair,
And silent gladness thrilled the hearts that knew
No shadow from the clouds of grief and care.
Yet bright comes ever after bud and bloom,
And so the years came a day to my fond heart,
When, with rebellious, bitter tears, I saw
Each tender hope that I had reared depart.
In light and mocking tones the word was spoken,
The tenderest of saddest of all words: "good-by,"
And then I felt that every tie was broken,
And that the flower of love must drop and die.
And as I stood that day and mutely listened
To your cold, mocking, last "good-by" again,
I wondered if I was loved or hated,
That paled my heart with such a maddening pain.
For years no peace came to my troubled life,
Save silence that was born of dark despair—
The mocking stillness that rebellious hearts
Find harder than the fiercest pain to bear!
And now we meet again when vanished years
Have robbed us of life's brightest, sweetest days;
Days when the world smiled on our youth and love
And held for us no rugged, thorny ways!
Yet I but hold you welcome for your face,
And now a fierce, a maddening, nameless pain
Stirs all my heartstrings into eager wish
To hold you in my empty arms again—
To feel your kisses rain on lip and brow—
To hear you say once more, "I love you, dear."
I ask no more, yet for the sake of my heart,
And all its losses should be bitter tears,
But kiss me once in the glad, old days,
And bridge with tender words the silence deep
That lies between us, brought up by his companion,
I may no more, haunting memories keep!

Nobody's Boy:
OR,
THE STOLEN CHILD.

BY CHARLES MORRIS.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT WAS "IN THE WIND?"
MINNIE ELLIS had not seen her father since she was five years of age. He had been at one time a prosperous merchant, but had failed in business through pressure of circumstances beyond his control. He had been greatly depressed by his misfortune, and there was soon added to it a greater; his wife suddenly sickened and died. Mr. Ellis was terribly cast down by this second trouble. He could not endure the scenes which constantly reminded him of former happiness and present misery. California had then become the goal of men seeking a quick return of fortune, and also of those seeking relief from sorrow in excitement. To this golden country his steps were turned. But the journey across the plains, which he resolved to take, was not fit for a delicate child of five years. Minnie was therefore left behind, in the care of a married sister of her father. During the interval which had elapsed between that period and the opening of our story he had not deemed it advisable to send for his daughter, though she received frequent affectionate letters from him. His mining adventures had not prospered. He was no richer to-day than on the day in which he had left Toledo. Besides, the rudeness of the mining-camp rendered it no place for his daughter. In the mind of the saddened man, striving year after year to win fortune from the rocks, this daughter was growing to be an angel of beauty and love; and he looked forward longingly to the day when the long-sought wealth should come to him, and he could be again united to his child, in some scene more attractive than the rude mining village. Minnie's aunt received from him sufficient money for the child's living and school expenses, and treated her with as much kindness as her nature permitted. She was a kindly, energetic housewife, and much of the milk of human kindness had soured in her over the kitchen fire, or had dried up under the strain of the broom-stick and scrubbing brush. She was kind to Minnie when she had time to be, which was not often; harsh to her when she interfered with household duties; and usually troubled herself but little about her. Severe as Madame Lucon was, Minnie preferred her school life, and the society of her school companions, to her home. Her aunt had a son, now a man of twenty-two, who had been a thorn in the flesh to her in her earlier years, but who had now been for some years absent from home. He was a sleek, specious, well-spoken boy, yet with a grain of innate selfishness and petty tyranny that had given much torment to the sensitive child who had been brought up by his mother. She had not seen him for more than two years, he being engaged in some position in the city of New Orleans. What was his position was never revealed very clearly by his letters, and there were several hints whispered in Toledo that he was not very creditably engaged. He had suddenly returned home just before the opening of our story. He proved now a well-dressed and well-behaved young man, and seemed by his display of attention to Minnie anxious to remove the bad impression he had left behind. The child was of a forgiving disposition, and quite willing to accept the advances of her cousin, though she could not understand the reason for the trust of this new bearing of her aunt. He seemed to have money in his pocket, and showed no disposition to seek new employment. One morning, however, when he was interviewed with Pete, the child was surprised by an unusual display of affection on the part of her aunt. This busy lady had usually dismissed her to school very curtly, but this morning she was kinder than usual. "Be sure, Minnie, and come home as soon as school is over," she said, "and be uneasy whenever you are late home from school." "But Madame Lucon keeps me in, sometimes," said Minnie. "She gives me such long tasks, and I cannot learn them." "I must really speak to her," said the aunt. "I fear she is overworking you. There, my dear, it is time you were going." She scooped up and kissed the child, dismissing her with an affectionate touch on the head. Minnie walked to school in a half-dazed condition. "My dear," from her aunt! What was going to happen? And as for a kiss, she could hardly remember ever being kissed by her before. "That is all to do with," she said to herself. "Madame will be doubly sure to make up for aunt's sweetness. I believe the old thing has a spite against me, anyhow." But the "old thing" was marvelously sweet this morning. "Have you your task ready, Miss Ellis?" she asked, in a tone so unlike her ordinary one that Minnie was at a loss to understand it. "I tried hard, Madame; indeed I did," said Minnie, in a pleading voice, "but I am afraid I have forgotten some." "Did you find it so difficult?" asked Madame. "Yes, Madame," said Minnie, "I did all evening," said the child, in answer to this unusual question. "Well, well, perhaps I did not consider your powers sufficiently. I have, however, been over your task, and you may have been over-tired. I will make your task lighter in future." "Oh, thank you, Madame! You are very kind indeed!" cried Minnie, "I get such headaches, and then I can't study at all." "Oh, Minnie!" said Madame, lifting her finger with what seemed a gesture of playful reproof. "Oh, Madame!" exclaimed Minnie, fearing that she had turned the tide of her good fortune. "It is too bad. I try to stop using that word, and I keep saying it in spite of all!"

"Cannot is more correct English," said Madame, kindly. "It is my aim to make you all polished speakers of your native tongue. I am sure you will not offend again."
No, indeed, not if I can help it," said Minnie, sincerely.
"Miss Brown, it is five minutes past school-hour," said Madame, severely, to a new-comer. Her tone had a very different strain from that which she had employed to Minnie.
The child passed on into the school more dazed than before. Were the heavens dropping manna into her empty cup?
Madame Lucon's kindness lasted the day through, and for several successive days.
Nor did aunt Sarah lose her new-found affection. She seemed trying to atone for past deficiencies in kindness.
Minnie seemed walking in a dream all these days. She could not see the cause of this sudden change, and was too young to trouble herself much about logical reasons. She accepted the fact gladly and asked no questions.
Her cousin was very attentive to her. He seemed to have no idea of engaging in any business, at least as long as he had any money in his pocket; and spent his time in the indefinite employment of loafing.
His attention to Minnie extended to occasionally accompanying her to school, or meeting her on her way home.
Minnie would chat with him with childish volubility, and quite failed to perceive a fact which escaped not his observant eyes. This was that she was constantly followed, in her comings and goings, by a ragged, disagreeable-looking boy, who was in his turn followed by as ragged and disreputable a dog.
Not that he appeared to be troubled about the child. He would be lounging here, or hurrying forward there, now selling papers, and now carrying a package; but he was always in sight when she was on the street, and always kept her in sight until she vanished behind the doors of the school or of her home.
He could see the boy afterward during the day everywhere, even in localities of questionable character, for the young man frequented some places and kept some company not much to his credit. This seeming persistence of the boy could not wholly be the effect of accident. There seemed to be too much method in it for that, and Minnie's cousin lost himself in conjectures of the lad's object.
Yet, instead of speaking directly to the boy he broached the subject to his mother.
"There he is, now, mother," he said, after telling her what he had observed. "I think it would be best for you to speak to the young vagabond. I am afraid that if I attempted it I might do him an injury." "Don't see that there would be any occasion for that, William," she replied.
"I know the boy is impudent," he said, "and I am a hasty temper. He might aggravate me too much."
"You should control your temper," she answered.
"No matter, I will speak to him." "Try and find out what his object is. I don't like his watching Minnie that way. You must for-

Pete laughed, defiantly.
"Got the kerriage ordered, ma'am. It's to be a ragged old-time blow-out, you bet. Two black nags, a dinky driver, and Nicodemus under the harness."
The dog, as usual, barked on hearing his name mentioned.
"If you don't see the little gal home to supper to-night, you kin know what's up. It's a set thing; you kin see your bottom dime on that. Good-by, ma'am." "Don't get no more of that," said Pete, and he whistled for Nicodemus, and started swaggering away.
Mrs. Denton remained coolly exasperated for speech, shaking her hand menacingly at the impudent young gamin.
But her son ran hastily out of the open door.
"There, you vagrant," he cried, in a passion. "I have seen you following my cousin. I am going to be on the watch to-night, and if you dare follow her again I will break every bone in your rascally body."
"You will, hey?" said Pete, boldly.
"Yes, and send you to the lock-up into the bargain. I will see if you young girls can't come some from school without being dogged by vagabonds. There is something up between you and some of the Toledo rascals. But, you have all got the wrong man to deal with if you stir me up."
"Ain't you a bit too windy, young man?" asked the undaunted boy. "I'm afraid you won't be able to cool your soup for dinner if you waste your breath that way."
The angry man made a rush at his antagonist. But Nicodemus sprang between with an angry bark and showed his teeth in a menacing way.
"Best hold your horses when Nicodemus is about," said Pete. "He don't allow no foolin'. Hope you said good-by to the little gal this mornin', for her and me is goin' to be spliced, sure!" He walked away again with a most aggravating gait.
That evening, sure enough, Minnie failed to return from school at the usual time. But such delay was nothing uncommon with her, and her aunt hardly noticed her absence, until the supper hour had arrived, and she had not yet appeared.
She began to grow nervous, however, as supper-time passed and Minnie was still absent.
Her son William now came in, and manifested the like uneasiness on knowing of this continued absence.
He had not had a chance of meeting her on her way home from school, as he had been doing during the few days past. He immediately started out in search of her. It was two hours before he returned, having been unsuccessful.
Mrs. Denton, now seriously alarmed, hastened to the school, and to the different houses at which the child had been in the habit of visiting.
No trace of her was forthcoming. One of the pupils had left her at a short distance from the school, declining Minnie's invitation to visit a piece of woodland, beyond the city limits, to gather spring flowers.
Madame Lucon shared her visitor's excitement on hearing of the child's strange absence. She declared that the police must be informed immediately of this alarming circumstance, and a search of the city instituted.

"Heard you was lookin' for me, ma'am," he said, "and thought I'd step up and report." "Mrs. Denton flung up her hands in intense excitement. "That is him!" she cried. "That is the young rascal! He threatened to steal Minnie! Catch him, somebody! Run for a policeman! He must be arrested!" "There ain't no sort of hurry, ma'am," said Pete, coolly. "I ain't got no notion of runnin' away. Woudn't you kinners been afraid. Me and Nicodemus ain't on the run." "Just hear him!" said one of the neighbors. "The impudent vagabond!" Mrs. Denton is right. "Maybe she is," said Pete. "I'm in 'er havin' this business settled, anyhow. Maybe I tuk off the gal and forgot it. Jist bring along yer perlie." "The good ladies assembled were somewhat staggered in their convictions by this unlooked-for willingness on the part of the boy. It was hardly the demeanor of guilt." "A half-grown girl had hastily left the circle on the first demand for an officer, and now appeared, bringing one of these important public functionaries." "So it is this young wharf-rat?" said the officer, on seeing Pete. "I always thought there was something wrong about this one. He is always fighting and getting into scrapes. Come along, my youthful offender. Who is going to appear against him?" "I am," said Mrs. Denton, eagerly. "And my son, also. We both heard his threats. He said—'That will do, ma'am,' replied the officer, curtly. "Tell the squire what he said. There is no use telling me. Come, my covey; you are wanted." He laid his hand heavily on Pete's shoulder. Nicodemus growled ominously, and showed his teeth. "Best take your paw off, Johnny, if you don't want a real cutlet took out of your calf," said Pete. "Nick ain't pertickler, when he's woke up, whether it's possum or perlie. I'm a-goin' with you; so don't fuss." The officer seemed himself to think that the dog was in earnest, and hastily removed his hand. "With all due regard to your position, I want all the witnesses at Squire Harvey's office below here." He had all the witnesses, and half the town, it seemed, judging by the throng that crowded into the room behind him and his prisoner. The squire, a middle-aged, half-bald man, with round, consequential face, and wearing glasses, looked up expectantly at the crowd. "After the fashion of magistrates everywhere, fines and dues were the breath of life to him, and he hailed every new case as so much grist to his mill." "Don't crowd in so, good people," he said. "We want some breath, and there's plenty of fresh air for you in the street. Who have you there, officer?" "A boy suspected of having something to do with the abduction of Minnie Ellis," said the policeman. "Ha!" cried the squire, pushing up his spectacles excitedly. "You don't tell me that! Who is he?" "He is a boy who threatened to run away with my niece," cried Mrs. Denton. "He talked to me in the most tantalizing way. And he said—'There, there, there! That will do,' exclaimed

"Don't you know your father's name?" asked the squire. "Dunno if I ever had any," said Pete. "If I had, he emigrated afore I knowed anything. All the extra name I got is what the boys gin me." "What is that?" "Fiscayne Pete, they call me." "A stir went through the throng at these words, accompanied by a loud murmur. "Silence there," cried the squire, severely. "What is the matter?" "Why, squire," cried one of the auditors, "this is the very boy who saved Minnie Ellis the other week, when she fell into the river. This is all the thanks he gets for it, to be arrested for stealing her. It is a blasted shame." "Who asked your opinion?" demanded the squire. "Are you hearing this case or me?" "It's so, anyhow," persisted the man. "Is that the fact, boy?" asked the justice. "Did you save the child's life?" "I dunno," answered Pete, carelessly. "Speet the steamboats mought have fished her out if I hadn't." "But you saved her?" "I jumped into the Maumee, that's sartin, and grabbed the little gal. Didn't quite like to see her go to the fishes." Pete was the most unconcerned person present. An excitement possessed the throng on finding that the child's rescuer stood accused of being concerned in her loss. Mrs. Denton, with a revulsion of feeling, pressed up beside him. "I withdraw the charge," she cried. "I was hard on the boy, and that is why he was so impudent to me, I suppose." The good lady had quick and tender feelings, when they once touched through her crust of every-day hardness. "Very well, ma'am," answered the squire, impatiently. "I will never get through this case if there are to be so many interruptions. Where do you live, boy?" "Down in Gray's Court." "Who with?" "Old Meg." "Meg what? Do you belong to a one-named species?" "If you'd hear her once, you'd think Meg was names enough," said Pete. "What do you do for a living?" "A little of everything, and not an extra lot of anything." "I wish no impudence. Give me an exact answer." "I carry bundles, hold horses, black boots, sell papers to the bushes, play circus, tend store, polish lamp-posts—"
"Hold there!" cried the squire. "That will do. You seem to be very numerously employed. How came you to tell this lady that her niece was stolen?" "She aggravated me 'bout the gal, and I wanted to worry her; that's all. Dunno a cent's worth about it." "How came you to follow her in the street, then, as this other witness testified?" "He's a galoot, squire, that's what he is," said Pete. "Me spend my time followin' a gal like I like a joke, but that's a bit too good. I'm kind of everywhere, every day, and he sees double sometimes. I reckon. Got too much business of my own on hand to follow gals." "I see nothing against the lad," said the squire to the audience. "His saving the child's life is proof that he had nothing to do with her loss. These witnesses have evidently taken too much for granted. What will you do, Pete, if I discharge you? I don't like to bear of your leading the life of a vagrant. You must try and get into some steady employment." "I ain't no vagrant," said Pete. "I've got a home for my nights, and plenty of business for day time. I reckon I know what's vagrant." "If you come before me again, boy, I fear I will have to commit you. You are leading an indolent and dangerous life." "I've got plenty of work out out ahead," said Pete. "What kind of work?" "I'm goin' for that gal, and the five thousand to boot; if I ain't, I'll sell out. Bound to bring her back. Brung her once afore, and guess I kin do it ag'in." A laugh ran through the crowd as they filed out of the office, followed by Pete, who was the lion of the hour. Nicodemus was waiting with a warm welcome for him, as he passed, a free boy, into the street again. The squire beckoned slyly to the officer, to remain behind. "Keep an eye on that boy," he said. "The young rogue knows more than he will tell."

CHAPTER VI.

PETE IS "POKED."
PETE went to work without delay, as he had promised. He had a double incentive in seeking Minnie Ellis. First, the interest which he had taken in the child, despite his assumed rudeness. Second, the hope to gain the reward offered. The magnitude of this reward was so great, in Pete's fancy, that it seemed a princely fortune to him. Five dollars was the highest spoke in the wheel of fortune to which his hopes had hitherto borne him. He bet silently to himself that if he won, he was going for a double-barreled, first-rater of a gun. The far distance, too, was some indefinite image of a "hoss." Further than this his imagination failed to carry him. Pete's ideas of luxury and of earthly grandeur were not very extended. He could sleep soundly on a hard board floor, do luxuriously on dry bread and mackerel, and felt most comfortably dressed in bare feet and a well-ventilated suit. Yet the serpent had entered into his Eden of sound sleep and good digestion, and the long-contented boy found himself thirsting in spirit for the bane of wealth. "I'm bound to have them five thousand, or bust," was his way of expressing this new-born longing. It must be confessed that he based this assurance on very slender foundations. He had heard the name "Minnie Ellis" pronounced in the street. This was the whole and sole fact that he had to work on, and yet he was fully satisfied in his mind that it would lead him to a solution of the mystery. He had this much warrant for his belief. The man who had spoken the name bore no creditable character; and his suspicious glance, and silence until Pete had passed, were indications of a mystery. The boy was shrewd enough to keep all this to himself during his examination before the squire. Long experience had taught him the virtues of discretion and a still tongue. "If I've struck a trail I don't want no pards," he said. "Guess I kin follow it without help." The man he had recognized was a well-known character in Toledo; in fact, much better known than respected. He called himself Colonel Green, though no one knew how he obtained his military title. As for himself, he had none visible, not the commonest of large. He gave out that he was a gentleman of means. In that case his income must have been very uncertain, for at times he grew utterly shabby and threadbare, and would shortly emerge on society in butterfly grandeur of dress. It was shrewdly whispered that his fortune lay in faro, and that his income came from the gaming-table. Whispered, not spoken, for Colonel Green was something of a bully, and it was dangerous to hint at his lack of respectability. He had, moreover, an evil eye, and a cruel expression of the mouth, that had a depressing effect on those who knew him. Pete, in his speculations, had often met him, though it is doubtful if the colonel had eyes for the vagrant who so intently regarded him. It worried our young detective that he had failed to recognize the companion of the colonel on the occasion referred to. It would have lightened his prospective labors to have a double trail to follow. As it was he had but a vague idea of the height, dress, and general appearance of the man, not sufficient to make him sure of recognizing him should he meet him. He must put himself on the track of Colonel Green, and see what would come of it. "And I've got to be as sly as an old coon about it," soliloquized Pete. "The kurnel's a hoss that's up to chaff. Got to watch him like an old crow watches a gunner. Guess, though, I've been there. Bet I sell out the kurnel. Fiscayne Pete's a pony hunter; if he ain't, I'll buy." But it proved not so easy to get on the track of Colonel Green. Pete was pretty well acquainted with all his lounging places, but he failed to make his appearance at any of them. He found out where the colonel lived, and sought him there. Here, too, he was astray. The object of his search had been absent from home for a week. This lack of success was rather encouraging to Pete than the reverse. There must be some good reason for the colonel's suddenly absconding himself, and Pete argued that the loss of Minnie Ellis was that reason. The boy had something of the instinct of the bloodhound. He was not to be deterred because the second was cold. Several days passed, during which Pete kept up this quiet but unsuccessful search for the colonel. What would have worried out many boys but worried him up to his task. "You're a keen critter, kurnel," he said, "and I'm kinder sorry for poor little Minnie. The gal must be skinned bad—anyway you've left these dogs blind and starved it across country. Won't blow to the pet-



"That's what I keer for the perlice," said Pete. "Nicodemus, he knows."

bid him from doing so, and threaten to have him arrested if he refuses." "I will not only threaten, but I will do it," she replied, to Minnie's safety matter of importance to us now, William. My brother, you know, is delicate, and may not live long." A meaning smile passed between mother and son, as the latter turned away and passed into the house. The boy stood erect against the corner of an opposite building, where a crowd of unloading a wagon at a grocer's store near by. He was a short, sturdy, shrewd-faced fellow, the bare skin showing through rents in his uncleanly clothes, while a shock of brown hair stood up like a plume through a hole in the top of his cap. His bare feet mocked at respectability. He crossed the street readily at her imperative call, whistling up his dog, who seemed doubtful about venturing into such austere company. "What is your name, boy?" asked Mrs. Denton, in her sternest tones. The lad leaned lazily against a lamp-post, and took a deliberate survey of the lady, from head to foot, before answering. "It's Pete, when folks want to be perlie, and it's Pete, when they're in a hurry," was his answer. "And what do you want here?" "Jist to see what you're a-calling me for. Nothing else, I reckon." "And is that why you have been hanging round this house for three or four days? I would like to know what a ragged young rascal like you wants in this respectable neighborhood?" "Anything to put vittles in my mouth," said Pete, with a grin. "Had a notion maybe you'd gin me a job." "You are watching an opportunity to steal," said the stern lady. "I will give you into the hands of the police if you continue to infest this neighborhood." "The perlice! Nicodemus, are you a-listenin'?" asked Pete of his dog. The dog responded with a disdainful bark. "Stand on your head, Nick, and wag your tail," commanded Pete. The well-trained dog performed this difficult operation with apparent ease. "That's what I keer for the perlice," said Pete. "Nicodemus, he knows. Don't see many dogs like that dog. There's good blood in that dog. He's a prime breed. Death on rats and rabbits, now I tell you." "Ask about Minnie," whispered William Denton, peering out from a door behind his mother. He had evidently been listening to this conversation. "That's all," said the stern lady. "You have been seen to follow my niece, Minnie Ellis, to and from school. Tell me, sirrah, what your designs are, or I shall certainly have you arrested. I cannot see what object a ragged vagabond like you has in such behavior." "Can't you guess?" asked Pete, with an impudent leer. "I wish no insolence, boy. I demand to know your object." "Sometimes fellers have got to keep mum," was Pete's aggravating answer. "Howsomever, if you won't tell anybody, I don't mind posting you." He lowered his voice to a confidential tone as he continued. "Fact is, ma'am, the little gal and me has about agreed to hitch houses. She's goin' to run away with me. A real 'lar'lopment, now I tell you. None of your locomotive, half-out runaways, but an out-and-out stunner. Don't you blow, ma'am. It's all on the sly." "Why, you insolent young rascal, how dare you? What do you mean?" cried the exasperated lady, advancing a step toward the imperturbable boy.

It was now past eight o'clock, the night was cloudy, and it had grown quite dark. The alarm spread through the town, and numbers of the citizens joined in the search. Evening deepened into night; the hours rolled on; yet the child continued missing. The more alarming apprehensions began to be entertained. Some supposed that she had been drowned, remembering her former escape. Others talked of murder. Every contingency was debated. The search was extended far beyond the city limits with torches and lanterns. Madame Lucon now spoke out. "I have just been informed," she said, "that Mr. Ellis has been lately very fortunate in his gold-mining, and is now possessed of great wealth. Some villain may have heard of this, and have stolen the child to exact money from the father." "She has been followed by a ragged boy, calling himself Pete," said Mrs. Denton. "He threatened me that she would be stolen this very afternoon. He must be arrested at once!" The secret of the aunt's and Madame's new kindness was out. They had heard of the good fortune of Mr. Ellis, but their sudden affection seemed likely to be of little benefit to Minnie. The night passed. A new day dawned. But a gloom rested upon the city, for the child was still missing. CHAPTER V. PETE AS A "LION."

THE excitement in Toledo was redoubled as the succeeding day advanced and no trace of the child was found. The town had been pretty thoroughly searched, the police entering every house which they had any reason to suspect. But the search was in vain, and the mystery deepened, hour by hour. The investigation extended to the country, the alarm spreading for miles around the city, and rousing a feeling of intense indignation against the child-stealers. There was no reason to suppose that Minnie had been drowned—the wood to which she had probably gone not being near any body of water. But a child could not be stolen from her midst, and hidden so completely, it was a matter of the most serious character. The unknown abductor might carry off the child of any inhabitant of the place with equal impunity. The security of the whole community was endangered if the stolen child should not be recovered and the abductors severely punished. Several of the richer inhabitants of the place combined to offer a reward, and before night the walls were placarded with handbills offering five thousand dollars reward for the recovery of Minnie Ellis and the capture of the child-stealers. Such an offer was well calculated to set all the people astir, with double assiduity, in search of the missing child. Mrs. Denton had already made public her suspicions of the boy calling himself Pete. His name was all she could tell about him, with an indefinite description of his appearance. "Has he, William?" asked the town through her. "Yes, I'll tell him. Pete had somehow made himself scarce." That night passed, and another day dawned on the quiet city. Mrs. Denton was eagerly detailing to a circle of sympathizing neighbors the story she had told of the boy, and the threat of the ragged vagrant, and of her mental certainty that he had stolen her niece, when, to her utter astonishment, the identical individual walked up to the group. His hands were sunk in his apologetic pockets, his cap was pushed on the back of his head, while Nicodemus, as usual, followed close to his heels.

"Wait till I ask for your evidence. Is this woman one of the witnesses, officer?" "Yes, sir." "We will hear what she has to say. Bring the boy in here." Pete, who had been mute as a mouse since being brought into the office, was conducted to a vacant space behind the magistrate's desk. He stood quietly enough, listening with an amused expression to Mrs. Denton's testimony. The good lady repeated, very fairly, what Pete had said about her niece, adding to it, however, with a dozen inferences, suggestions and conjectures. William Denton's testimony was to the same effect. He told what had passed between his mother and the boy, and of the boy's insolence to himself. He also described how Pete had followed Minnie to and from school, and the suspicions which had been roused in his mind. At the conclusion of his evidence there was plainly a strong feeling against Pete. There was no other witness, except that some persons present volunteered their opinion of the vagrant character of the prisoner. Pete sat imperturbably through it all, not speaking or moving. With the lack of etiquette usual in a local magistrate's office the persons present were not deterred by the official dignity of the squire from freely expressing their opinions. "Just look at the young villain!" said one excited individual. "You might think he was a lamb, he looks so innocent." "He ought to be hung," growled another. "There must be a lesson to these rascally child-stealers. There is no safety for our children." "That's so," said a somewhat tipsy fellow. "I've got a farter of my own, and it would jist break my heart if she'd—"
"If she'd break the jug the next time you sent her for whiskey," said a fourth. This interruption created a laugh, and somewhat calmed the growing hostility to the prisoner. The squire had now finished taking his notes of the evidence, and was adjusting his spectacles at a severe angle, he called out: "Has the defense any witnesses?" There was no answer to this appeal, save a murmur in the audience. "No one here who knows anything about the defendant?" continued the squire. "I ain't going to let a fellow be sent to jail without a word for him, blowed if I am," said the tipsy man, edging his way forward. "What do you know about him?" asked the squire, severely eyeing this witness. "Why, squire," said the man, "he done something for me only yesterday. Done it well, too." "What was it?" The man commenced to speak, then hesitated, and became silent. "Brought him a pint of old rye from Tim Hogan, I bet a cow," said a voice back in the crowd. "If I did I didn't swig a drop of it," said Pete, now for the first time speaking. "Hold your tongue there, boy," cried the squire. "Get back, feller. I didn't ask who you was in the habit of sending for your whiskey. Bring the boy up, officer; I will question him." Pete was accordingly brought before the stern tribunal of local justice. He did not seem particularly awed by the squire's dignity, however, but stood before him in an easy and careless attitude. "What is your name?" asked the squire, looking over his spectacles at the boy. "Pete." "Pete! That's only half a name. Pete what?" "Never had no second story a name, Pete what?" said Pete.

A CHRISTMAS DINNER.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Another Christmas day is born
Upon the earth, let all be glad.
How fair the time, how sweet the morn
(I fear I'll carve this turkey, *brod*)
Let songs of gladness (Mercy, Prue,
Did that wing fly into your lap?)
On this bright morn be sung anew.
(That fork, it was a sad mishap!)

The world is under frost and snow.
The Christmas sky above is clear,
(Carving with me is mighty slow)
And happy hearts are full of cheer.
They seem to rise on gladness wing
Above all care to-day. (How fast
A turkey joints together cling)
And reverence turns toward the past.

Day hallowed by long centuries,
(Miss Jane, the brown meat or the white?)
What hopes make bright its hovering skies!
(There goes the dressing, what a plight!)
Gay cheeks warm up with tender blood,
(Miss Kate, what part do you prefer?)
And eyes shine out in merry mood.
(That hungry child, just look at her!)

Let harmony and peace so sweet
Rule all this day of perfect joy!
(I'll box your turkey, I'll be eat,
In better taste, now mind, my boy.)
Peace and good will this day shall reign—
(Lord, wife, what makes this tea so hot?)
A happy morn, a blessed, warm day!
(My coat, there'll be another spot.)

Let gladness cheer the dearest day
In all the calendar of life,
(Please pass the pepper-sauce this way.)
And put an end to every strife.
That marks the earth. (Yes, forks were made
Long after hands) and let the sheath
On war-belts hide the better blade.
(That boy will choke himself to death!)

Nor yet forget the shivering poor,
Who know what hunger is, and pain,
(John, let me help you to some more.)
And cannot share the Christmas strain.
No feast to-day is set for them.
(Unsweetened is their bitter cup)
This thought fills eyes unto the brim.
(This turkey, boy it fills one up!)

The Christmas of the poor in haunts
Of hunger has but I to cheer;
(Just half a cup) they plead their wants;
Oh, lead to them a listening ear!
The cheerful giver shall be blest,
(I've lost my appetite) the tones
Of gratitude shall cheer his breast.
(Here, Biddy, gather up the bones.)

Great Captains.

HORATIO NELSON,
The Victor of the Nile and Trafalgar.

BY DR. LOUIS DEGRAND.

If Wellington was the Hero of a Hundred Battles Nelson was the Hero of a Hundred Sea Combats that brought renown to the British navy, and added laurels to the British name. And almost equally with Wellington did he share the popular applause and command the government's confidence in his prowess. Wellington, indeed, was not Wellington when Nelson's star was in the ascendant. Arthur Wellesley was a colonel in the Indian service when the magnificent victory of the Nile (1798) covered Nelson with glory, and when Nelson's life went out at the terrible but glorious combat at Trafalgar (Oct. 1805) Wellington was still but Sir Arthur, having but returned from India, early in that year. His name and fame supplemented that of Nelson, and kept alive British dominion in the work of destroying Napoleon.

Nelson, called by some writers the greatest of British admirals, came of a peaceful strain of lineage and blood. He was the fourth son of the rector of Burnham-Thorpe, in Norfolk, and was born Sept. 29th, 1758. His education was but fairly complete in the school at North Walsham, when, at twelve years of age, he was sent to sea along with his maternal uncle, Captain Suckling, of the Reasonable man-of-war. Being the fourth boy there was nothing for him but to carve out his own destiny—his only "setting out" a government appointment as midshipman. The Reasonable soon pointing out of commission, the young "midship" was off, but having been in a sea career he made a trip to the West Indies—during which, as an "apprentice," he saw sailor life as it was, in the transport service, and returned to England, we are told by Southey, in good, practical seaman, but with a hatred of the king's service, and a saying then common among the sailors—"aft the most honor, forward the better man."

To cure this hatred—which, considering the boy's fearless and earnest nature, we presume was outspoken, much to the disgust of Captain Suckling again took Horatio in hand, and a cruise in the *Triumph* followed. And here it may be said, what he learned in that West India transport, of the brains in the forecastle and the inefficiency of the ward-room and cabin, was left him, and during his after-life he was noted for his attention to his men, and for his consideration for those, no matter what their position, who were thorough duty. This recognition of merit so endeared him to his men that his devotion to his orders was one secret of his remarkable achievements.

The young midshipman "tried his hand," as so many eminent British officers have done, in search of the North-west Passage, going on the expedition under Commodore Phipps, on Captain Ludwidge's vessel. We are told that, in all the voyage—which was one of exceeding adventure and peril—he behaved with a "skill, courage and promptitude" that won the encomiums of officers and men. Though but a lad in years, he then gave promise of his future greatness.

After a voyage to the East Indies, in the *Seahorse*, in 1777 he passed the examination for lieutenant, and was commissioned as second in the *Lowestoft* frigate cruising in American waters; but, as we then had no navy, the frigate had no active service. Nelson had his first independent command in the *Hinchinbrook*, of which he was post captain (1779), and participated in the siege and bombardment of San Juan Port; but in this service in the Gulf he sickened and went home to recruit.

Nelson came back to America in the *Albemarle*; and also held command of the *Boreas*. In this service was also the Duke of Clarence—afterward William IV. He was a "midship" in the fleet, and thus described Nelson, as he then (1785) appeared:

"I was a midshipman on the *Barfleur*, lying in the Narrows off Staten Island, and had the watch on deck, when Captain Nelson, of the *Albemarle*, came in his barge alongside, and appeared to be the merest boy of a captain I ever beheld. His dress was worthy of attention; he had on a full laced uniform; his hair, black and powdered, was tied in a stiff Hessian tail of an extraordinary length; the old-fashioned flaps of his waistcoat added to the general quaintness of his figure, and produced an appearance which particularly attracted my notice, for I had never seen anything like it before, nor could I imagine who he was nor what he came about. My doubts, however, were removed when Lord Hood (the Admiral) came on board. There was something irresistibly pleasing in his address and conversation, and an enthusiasm when speaking on professional subjects that showed he was no common being."

In 1787 he married and remained off duty at Burnham-Thorpe until 1798. Then the war with the French "Republic" broke out, and Nelson was assigned to the *Agamemnon*—a sixty-four gun-ship, and in June sailed in Admiral Hood's fleet for Toulon. This town finally surrendered to the British, "acting in behalf of Louis XVIII," and Nelson bore dispatches to Naples to Sir William Hamilton, the resident English ambassador at the court. In this mission he first met Lady Hamilton. She was the wife of the ambassador, and then in her twenty-seventh year. Though of low origin, and of questionable life record up to the date of her transfer, for a money consideration, to Sir William, by his nephew, she had become the distinguished *diplomate's* legal

wife, and by her wondrous beauty, her natural brilliancy of mind, and her genius for court and political intrigue was a person of immense influence in Naples. With its fifty-on-the-great captain was destined to link his name and fame in a way that forms the only spot on his otherwise unblemished glory.

Sir William met Nelson, and on returning home told his wife of the affair, saying that he had met in the city a little man who could not boast of being handsome, but who would become the greatest naval man England ever produced. "I know it," said the acute minister, "from the very few words of conversation I have already had with him. I pronounce that one day he will astonish the world."

Commencing with operations at Toulon, he entered upon a career of marvelous activity. He seemed possessed of a demon of unrest, and yet it was not that, at all—only his desire to add glory to the British name. With the siege of Bastia (Corsica) he carried his men ashore and directed them in the batteries, after engaging and capturing the ship *Ca Ira* in a brilliant fight. And again at the celebrated siege of Calvi (Corsica) he was all through its fifty-on-the-great captain, and paid the penalty of glory by the loss of an eye—which took from his face one of his distinguishing marks of high intelligence and spirit. But this loss did not draw him from the deck. His ship became a kind of flying terror to French traders and was captured, and he fought wherever an enemy was to be struck.

He was in Admiral Hotham's fleet in its action with the French fleet, March 15, 1795, and was made commander, (1796) from sheer brilliancy of his exploits. With the *Mingos* frigate he captured the *La Sabine*, but had to abandon his prize as the Spanish fleet bore down on him. He ran for the fleet of Sir John Jarvis, off Cape St. Vincent, (Portugal), closely pursued by the enemy's whole sail, and striking his flag to the larger and finer ship, captain of seventy-four guns, he participated in the memorable, fierce and sanguinary combat of fleets that ensued, (February 13, 1797). He closed in with the man-of-war *Santissima Trinidad*, of one hundred and thirty-six guns, was captured, and, by boarding, then he dashed in, and, by boarding, carried the *San Nicolas*, of eighty guns; and, turning upon the *St. Joseph*, of one hundred and twelve guns, took her by a close quarter engagement, cutting her in two.

For this wonderful performance—so like the work of our own John Paul Jones—he was made knight of the Bath, rear admiral of the blue, and given command of the in-shore squadron blockading Cadiz. He tried to carry that town by bombarding, but the attack was too strong for him, though the attack was one of fierce determination. From Cadiz he ran out to the Canaries and tried to capture the town of Santa Cruz, in Tenerife Island, but was repulsed in a very severe conflict with the forts and troops. In attempting to carry the town by assault, the admiral was struck in the right arm by a cannon-shot, and was saved by his son-in-law, Captain Nesbit, who bore the wounded man on his back to the boats. This shattered arm was amputated, and Nelson returned home to recover. A pension of one thousand pounds per year was the reward. In his memorial to Parliament he specifies that he had been in fleet action four times, in three of which he had used his own sword in combat; had participated in the taking of four towns; had served in the sieges of Bastia and Calvi; had helped to take seven sail of the line, six frigates, four corvettes, and eleven privateers; had captured fifty merchant vessels; had been in action one hundred and twenty times; had lost a right arm and right eye, besides receiving other severe wounds. What a record for a man of forty years; and yet it was only a prelude to the more momentous and important service to come.

In 1798 he sailed with Earl St. Vincent, (Jarvis), who dispatched him to watch the progress and prevent the escape of Buonaparte's expedition, fitting out in Toulon, for some secret destination. But, before he sailed, he was told to go—no one knew whither. So Nelson cruised all along the Italian coast and thence to Alexandria, Egypt, but finding no French fleet there returned to Sicily. There he first learned of the nature and strength of the French Egyptian Invading Expedition, and on August 1st, 1798, within the harbor, at Aboukir Bay, lay a fleet, composed of one first-rate, three second-rates, nine seventy-fours, four frigates, etc., etc. The French were anchored in a line, supported by heavy batteries on an island and strengthened by gun-boats.

With Nelson, to see an enemy was signal to fight. He was greatly inferior in guns, men and vessels, to the French, but did not hesitate. Taking in the situation, he ordered a division of his fleet to pass inside of the French battle-line, while the rest moved along in front. This daring but masterly maneuver placed the enemy between two fires. The battle commenced as the British moved on, and the French were defeated, and before the astounded enemy could change to meet the peril, the action was precipitated. It was fearfully sanguinary. The French ships, one by one, were dismantled, and the admiral's aim of one hundred and twenty guns, took fire and blew up. But the fight went on. All night long the struggle continued, and one by one the French squadron struck. At daybreak only two sail of the line of the French had their colors flying, seeing that all the others were sunk, put to sea and fled.

This victory made Nelson the world's talk. He was created Baron Nelson of the Nile, received Parliamentary thanks, was voted a pension of £20,000, etc., etc.

Nelson steered for Sicily to refit; thence to Naples, where he participated in the restoration of the Bourbons, whom the French had driven out, and—met Lady Hamilton again, to fall so deeply in love with her as to forget that he was a husband and she a friend's wife. Thereafter the enters into the life of a man who is devoted to him a divinity he worshipped with an idolatry surpassingly beautiful, if each had been free to love and wed.

Nelson next served as second in Admiral Sir Hyde Parker's fleet, dispatched to force the entrance to the Baltic, but did not enter. "Northern Confederates"—Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Nelson volunteered to run the Cattegat. This he did (April 2d, 1801), and then engaged the Danish fleet, by which seventeen ships and vessels were destroyed. The severe punishment brought the Confederates to terms, and since that day the straits leading into the Baltic has been a sea "thoroughfare" to all nations.

Nelson was now made a Viscount and his honors made hereditary in his family, even in the female line.

When hostilities reopened after the peace of Amiens (March 27th, 1802), Nelson was given command of the Mediterranean. He sailed March 10th, 1803, heading for Toulon, but, despite his vigilance, the French fleet escaped and headed for Cadiz. There joined by the Spanish fleet, it started at once for the West Indies. Nelson, though much inferior in strength, pursued, and the combined fleets returned to Cadiz, in October, having accomplished nothing, with Nelson constantly on their heels. The two allies, refitted and strengthened in Cadiz, resolved to attack the Briton, and on October 21st came upon Nelson's squadron, off Cape Trafalgar. The combined fleets consisted of thirty-three sail of the line and seven frigates; the British numbered twenty-seven of the line and four frigates.

Signaling to his ships, "England expects every man to do his duty," he ordered his flag-ship, the *Victory*, to close in with his old prize, the *Santissima Trinidad*, the enemy's flag-ship. Dividing his fleet into two sections—one headed by his own ship, the other by Collingwood, in the *Sovereign*, they went into action. Ship engaged ship. The struggle was awful. The *Victory*, closing in with the *Trinidad*, was soon flanked by the *Redoubtable*, and when he had supposed that vessel had struck, Nelson was shot by a sharp-shooter in her main-tops, as he stood on the poop of his own ship, in full sight of the enemy. The ball struck his epaulet and penetrated downward, making a ter-

rible wound, which he at once knew to be mortal. He was borne to the cockpit and survived long enough to learn that victory was his. Collingwood fought it out, and of all that splendid squadron less than one half escaped to Cadiz.

Nelson's death at the moment of victory greatly affected the whole nation. He was laid in state for six days, and a nation was in mourning. Then came such a funeral as never before was seen or known in the kingdom, and St. Paul's cathedral received its thousands.

They now rest, side by side with those of Wellington, and like those of Wellington, treasured with a pride that a world respects. Nelson being childless by his legal wife, his title and estates reverted to his brother, Rev. William Nelson. Lady Hamilton, of whom he talked and thought in his last moments, considering her and her child to the nation's care and consideration, was treated with a scorn that sent her into a miserable exile in France, where she died an object of charity. It may have been a proper punishment for her adventurous and irregular life, but Nelson's solemn adulations to his country and friends to care for her and her daughter, render her neglect and anything else than a pleasant thing to contemplate.

The Newsboy's Christmas.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

"SAY! Goin' to the Christmas dinner?"
"You bet!"
"I'm yer chap!"
"Hooray for old J. P.!"
Two or three newsboys had met where the avenue intersects with Sixth street, and stopped to discuss the subject which was uppermost in every newsboy's thoughts in the Smoky City that Christmas Eve—the annual dinner given by a certain newspaper man to their fraternity on Christmas Day.

"How awful good of him," said one, with a wistful look in his big, hungry eyes.
"Sartin sure, greeney!"
"Pshaw! tell that to the marines. 'Tain't an overprize of greeney, it's ails him, it's—ducks," said another, dropping his voice as he came to a dramatic and stage-thrilling whisper. There was a general laugh, they separated, and the usual cry here and there upon the street soon testified that this was no holiday for them, whatever the morning might be.

Even little Barney of the hungry-looking eyes, "greeney" though he was, mustered up courage to make his voice heard.

"Ere's yer Evening Leader—Leader—Chronicle!"
"Give me a Leader," said a young lady, leaning out of a carriage which had just drawn up at the curb. "Never mind the change. Don't you remember me, Barney?"

Barney looked, and a sudden glow lit his countenance. Remember her? Yes, as he would have remembered a heavenly angel had such a vision ever crossed his path, for poor little Barney had a hard life of it, and no one else had looked at him with such kindly eyes, or spoken to him with so much compassion as she, once before had fallen from the lips of Myrtle Ventnor.

But now the fair face he remembered was lit with a strange excitement, and without waiting a reply, she went on eagerly:
"How many papers have you to sell? I'll buy them all if you'll do something for me, Barney. Will you? Here, then. Jump in and go home with me. Oh, Barney! you saved Muff for me, and now I do believe you can save me if you will."

For the newsboy, he almost believed himself in a dream as he sank back among the luxurious cushions of the warm carriage, and saw the lovely face of the girl opposite turned to him in passionate appeal.

"Great trouble, Barney. I am to be married on New-Year's Day, and don't want to be. Papa is all for the match, and that's why I ever promised, but I grow more afraid as the time comes nearer. The person I am to marry is a fellow who has no money, and is very well, and now I am almost sure he is not an honorable man. They will not let me off since I have promised, but papa would if I could prove that to him, and I am almost sure I can if you will help me. Will you?"

"Won't it?" uttered Barney, enthusiastically.
"I'd jump off the 'Spenson Bridge if you was to ask me, Miss Myrtle."

"You dear boy!" Tears were shining in Myrtle's eyes now, and she bent over impulsively, and kissed that tattered waist of the street. "I knew you had a good heart because you saved my poor doggie from being run over at the risk of the same to yourself. Now, I am taking you home with me so you may see Mr. Locke. He is a noble thing, with golden hair like another man, a ruffian by his looks, and heard him say, 'Then at three to-morrow I will be free of you.' He saw me at the minute coming out of a store, and pretended he had not been holding any communication with the other, but I know his name, and I could discover what his connection with that rough-looking man is, I would be free. I want you to mark him so that you cannot possibly be mistaken, and then follow him; don't lose sight of him for an instant, and when you find him, find out what he has done at three to-morrow. If it should be something that will break off the match, you shall be like a brother to me always. Oh, Barney! I was very miserable, and seeing your face was like a gleam of hope. I feel sure that you will not fail me, though every one else has. And Barney felt sure of it, too, though the grand Christmas dinner did flash up for a minute in his thoughts, then it faded slowly away, a vision of what never was to be.

The spot was in the midst of extensive lumber-yards and as desolate as you can well imagine, with the keen blast driving up from the river armed with tiny points of falling snow that cut spitefully against the hands and faces exposed to it, and covered with a pale yellow dust of the entrance to the city covered with the snow. Men there were thinking little of wind or storm.

The one rose from the sheltered corner where he had been waiting as the ringing footsteps of another had passed, and he advanced, and as he turned an angle they stood abruptly face to face.

"Oh!" said Dion Locke, recoiling slightly.
"You are here. I began to think you had not kept the appointment."

"Likely that I wouldn't. Have you brought the cash?"
"What else would bring me? Before you get it, however, there must be a closer bargain between us than I had time to talk of yesterday. Did you keep your word and come here without telling any one of your intention?"

"Of course. A bargain's a bargain with me, as you ought to know."
"And with me also, my friend. I want it understood distinctly that the payment of the money you have demanded ends all matters between us. I want you to promise that you will never tell what you know will over pass to any of your low associates, and I want you to keep the promise. I will not be annoyed by you or any of your kind hereafter, remember that."

"Growing mighty particular of your company, aren't you now?" sneered the man. "More'n when you were lagged for burglary along of three of us that thought ourselves as good as you was in them days."
"Take care," said Locke, in a tone of deadly quiet.
"I will take care when I have as much reason to be afraid of you as you have for being afraid of me. I've got you where I want you, Dion Locke, and there's no help for it. That wasn't your name, by the way, in the other times, and I don't know how you've managed to turn up here of all places as a relation of one of the first families."

"I am a relation," interrupted Locke, still quietly.

"Then they must find you a creditable one. Well, I do know you have got the wherewithal, and you'll fork over liberal, or I'll go to the old sardine with the handsome daughter, and tell 'em both in so many words that you served out your two years in the Western along with better men. You see I've took particular pains to inquire into your affairs. I've got you where I want you, and nothing but couldn't down square on the sardine's goin' to save you from being squashed like an orange before I'm through with you. Be liberal with me; that's your only course."

"Is it I, too, have you where I want you at last?"
All the time he had been talking he was moving gradually back into the hollow space left by surrounding stacks of lumber, the other unconsciously following, and as he spoke those words a fierce light leaped into his face; his hand was uplifted, followed by a flash and a sharp report. A sure shot, for the other stumbled and fell forward upon his face quite dead.

The murderer stooped over his victim to make sure of the fact, and, raising suddenly, started back with a frightened ejaculation breaking over his lips.

He had caught the momentary glimpse of a pallid, elish face peering at him from above. He made a dash for the spot, but the light figure had slipped down. The alleys were dark and intricate, and his subsequent search failed to reveal to him the witness of his crime. He had a good memory for faces, and knew he had seen that one before; after an effort of recollection, he remembered where. It had been lifted toward him for a moment on the previous evening. He descended the steps from Mr. Ventnor's door.

Perhaps it was that recollection; perhaps it was only a wish to prove something as near to an *alibi* as possible, should the necessity for it occur, which led him to make all possible speed in his long flight. But the fleet-footed, lighter-bodied messenger was before him.

As Mr. Locke was admitted, the very face which was haunting him glanced forth from the gathering shadows of the hall, and the look of terror it had worn as it peered down upon that scene of horror, sprung to it again. With reason, too, for everything but the storm of rage sweeping through his evil soul was forgotten by the man. He took a stride forward; his sinewy fingers were close upon the boy's throat, and one instant poor Barney, the victim of his wrathful desperation, swung in the air, and then he was flung with crushing force against the opposite wall, and fell a senseless heap upon the floor.

"Now, tell tales if you can," Locke muttered; and an instant later woke to a realization, which his rage had blinded him to before, that others stood around.

Myrtle sped past him with a pitying cry to kneel beside the boy, and Mr. Ventnor faced him passionately.

"You villain! You have added another crime to your list without avail. He has told us his story, and however I was inclined to regard it before, I have no doubt now. Your brazen hardness has led you to your own swift punishment, thank God!"

He turned to an officer who appeared upon the outer threshold at the moment—one for whom he had sent to receive the boy's testimony—whom he was about to charge now with a different commission; but Locke realized his danger, and, dashing them both out of his way in his forward rush, escaped for the time.

For the time only. He was finally apprehended for the murder, tried, and sentenced to life-long imprisonment, that modification from the death sentence following when it was proved that the murdered man had been a thoroughly disreputable character.

And for Barney, he was as tough as a newsboy could be, and lived after all the rough treatment he had received, to know that disastrous Christmas Day as the opening to a very different life. He has never gone to the newsboys' annual banquet to this day; but he does not forget that he was once one of them, while he is repaying the kindness of the Ventnors in the full measure which a bright and clever boy could do, by close application to the studies they have placed within his reach, and that he will do honor to himself and them I do not doubt.

A Man's Blunder.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

TWO RICHMOND looked handsome enough to have captivated any girl's heart, as he stood leaning against the mantel, looking down with laughing eyes on the girl who was sitting on the low hassock in the bay-window—such a pretty, fair little thing, with golden hair tied back from her blossom face, and the dearest, prettiest pair of vivid lips.

Very sweet, very lovable, but with a despondency on her face that had no business there, with a little pitiful quiver on her warm lips, and a look that did not see, she would never have stood looking so mischievously at her.

"Take my advice, Lily; we fellows know what's in such cases. Take my advice, and don't let Rex Merle make you so miserable. He likes you, you know he does, because he said so better than any girl he ever saw, when he gets ready, he'll propose—my word for it—unless you discourage him by being too—too—well, too anxious about him. You see, a fellow don't like a girl to let on she's in love with him, and 'poshonor, Lily, don't get vexed, but really you do let him know so well how much you like him."

A hot, mortified blush surged over her face.
"Oh, Theo! I am sure I never did. I should die if I thought I had."

Richmond caressed his mustache affectionately.

"Well, maybe you haven't only. There's this one thing, that there's no surer way to make a fellow pony up—that is, if you want him to propose—than to flirt with some other fellow, and arouse his jealousy, you know. Why don't you do it? There's Colonel Elmer; he's stylish and handsome, and a word from me will fix it all right. He'll be delighted to play a little farce with you, and Merle will not be slow in doing his duty. Shall I speak to Elmer, Lily?"

"Oh, no! no! Oh, I couldn't, Theo! If Mr. Merle doesn't care for any one, I am sure—Oh, Theo, there comes Colonel Elmer now! Promise me you won't say a word!"

And she turned her flushed, nervous face toward him, her eyes shining with tears, her pretty mouth trembling, and he gave the promise, as he sauntered off with the handsome military gentleman, with the mental reservation that he would not say a word to help his little sister through—he would say a number of them.

And Lily went away up to her own room; and Mr. Rex Merle emerged from the curtains with a smile on his face.

"So that is the little game, is it? Miss Lily, I shall punish you for this—a little only, you loving little darling! I will flirt as well as you yourself; and if you and Colonel Elmer have a good time, so will the charming Mrs. Cladesley and myself! Two can play at your game, Miss Lily; and when I am tired of my part of it, I will capitulate at your pretty feet, and we'll see where the laugh comes in."

Of course his thoughts were silent ones—people never soliloquize who are blessed with their five senses—and Mr. Merle looked very delighted as he walked down toward the hotel where the beautiful widow was boarding.

Not that the mature charms of Mrs. Cladesley can win his heart from its allegiance to dear little Lily, but it will be a good lesson to her to make her appreciate any offer when I make it, as I certainly shall when I am ready, despite Colonel Elmer's attentions or the fair Sylvia's attractions."

He walked leisurely along, switching at the daisies with his cane—a fine-looking, well-

dressed, self-possessed fellow, with plenty of conceit about him—and where will you find the man without more than his fair share?

That afternoon Mrs. Cladesley was uncommonly fascinating, and Mr. Merle staid longer than he expected—so long, that when at last he went, he was just in time to see Colonel Elmer and Lily Richmond driving briskly along behind the colonel's thoroughbreds. And a little, appealing look on Lily's face, as they exchanged nods, told Col. Elmer that ever where her young affection was.

And he lifted his hat with a careless smile, that smote her like a blow, and that made Colonel Elmer compress his lips in wrath at the "conceited puppyism of the rascal who dared trifle with such a little darling as Lily Richmond."

So it appeared that Theo had entrusted Lily's cause to the colonel's gallant care, after all.

The October banners of red and gold were hung gayly out, and a crisp frostiness was in the air, that brought warm, glowing tints to Lily Richmond's cheeks, as she and Philip Elmer sauntered along the leaf-strewn road—the frost a something, perhaps the earnestness in her escort's voice.

"It hardly seems possible it is the very last day, does it, Lily? What a charming summer it has been—to me!"

"And to me as well. How I wish you were not going, Colonel Elmer!"

She was looking at the little flurry of leaves at her feet.

"Do you really mean that? Oh, I dare say you do, come to think of it, because I have been so useful."

She looked suddenly at him.

"You promised never to refer to the awkward arrangement Theo made. Please don't, Colonel Elmer."

She laid a dainty little hand on his arm—they had been such unimportant trifles, and she had discovered that Theo had "spoken a word" to the colonel.

"I will not. But there is one thing I must speak of, Lily—I must tell you that if it were not that you loved fortune Merle so grandly and nobly as you do, I would confess that Lily how can I be so particular and deliberate in language, when my whole soul is calling out for you, my love, my darling, my white Lily!"

And by his deathly pale face, his earnest eyes she knew that, for him, the farce was not a farce, but a reality.

And she! She felt her heart leap almost to her throat as she listened, and she lifted her sweet eyes for one glance at his impassioned face.

"Colonel Elmer, I—I—was—mistaken when I thought I cared for Mr. Merle! I—don't!"

He had her in his arms before she could finish.

"Lily, love, tell me! I have not learned to love you in vain! Lily! Lily! you do love me! Say it—say so!"

And she must have said so, because that same evening Theo Richmond went up to Rex Merle, as he was walking to and fro on the piazza, smoking contentedly, and thinking it was about time to end matters with himself and the dashing widow.

"Congratulations, Mr. Rex, on my brother-in-law—elect! Phil and Lily have commissioned me to tell you of their engagement. Splendid match, isn't it? And, by-the-by, here's a letter for you—the Cladesleys' hand, and the letter to the lamp at the head of the piazza steps, to read a little notelet Sylvia's fair hand had penciled an hour before."

He set his teeth together hard, as he walked to and fro in the cool October night; and cursed his ill luck, and the hour he ever saw Sylvia Cladesley—laying the blame where it did not belong, and where men are so fond of laying it, on the woman. Up and down, up and down he strode until he suddenly remembered the letter in "the Cladesleys' hand, and he stepped to the lamp at the head of the piazza steps, to read a little notelet Sylvia's fair hand had penciled an hour before."

"MY DEAR MR. MERLE:—You surely do not intend for me to return to the city without another word from you? Have you forgotten me now, quite early? I will see you this evening, at any hour convenient to yourself, and I am sure you will not refuse me. I have written you a letter, which I shall be obliged to hand to my brother, who is with me for a day or so, in order to have their charmingly affectionate contents translated. Please let us see you to-night, and know I am, Ever Faithfully, S."

"P. S. You remember how you addressed and subscribed your last letter to me?"

His hands were trembling like aspen leaves as he read the suggestive note—suggestive of his ally in having carried his flirtation beyond the bounds of prudence (if there be such a boundary), suggestive of the beautiful West Indian's temper; suggestive of a suit for breach of promise would it be, or what?

And he went into the house, and made his preparations, and after all his magnificent lordliness of the summer, sneaked away under cover of the darkness, a miserable, disappointed, disgusted man. While fair Lily was as happy as the days were goldenly bright.

Ripples.

AN Ohio jockey furnishes horses with false teeth so as to conceal their age. The trick is too thin.

About the only person we ever heard of that was not spoiled by being lionized was a Jew named Daniel.

Man is selfish, even in his charities, but woman's generosity is unbounded. She does not even limit her goodings to her own family.

Velvet flowers are very fashionable on bonnets for day wear, such as sweet peas of a deep, rich tone and variegated carnations.